



## News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Columbia Avenue Bridge Opens!**

**RIVERSIDE, Calif.** –Thursday, March 11, 2010 marked the official opening of the newly completed Colombia Avenue bridge.

“With 26 at grade (street level) train crossings, commuters in the City of Riverside feel the impact of regional and national train traffic every day,” said Siobhan Foster, Director of Public Works. The intersection of trains and streets causes safety issues to pedestrians and vehicles, delays traffic, slows response times for emergency vehicles, creates train horn noise and impacts air quality due to idling cars.

The most effective way to address this problem is to construct grade separations. A grade separation separates the train from pedestrians and vehicles by building a bridge for the train or a bridge for the cars and people.

“How we get around in Riverside is an important part of our quality of life and economic development. The completion of the Columbia Grade Separation Project is an example of the City’s commitment to improving traffic and air quality issues for business and residents...” said Mayor Ronald O. Loveridge.

The new Columbia Avenue bridge, completed in just 15 months, was built to accommodate cars passing over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad tracks in the Hunter Business Park, between La Cadena Drive and Iowa Avenue. 16,000+ vehicles will never again have to wait for the 100+ trains per day saving about five hours of daily commute time and 29 tons of greenhouse gas emissions every year.

The new bridge features a pedestrian sidewalk and four lanes of traffic which can be expanded to five lanes in the future. The final cost is estimated at \$30 million which is 6% less than the original estimate.

Columbia Avenue is the second grade crossing project completed in the City in less than two years, with Jurupa Avenue Grade Separation finished in June 2009. The City continues its strategic approach to minimizing train travel impacts in the City with the Magnolia Grade Separation underway.

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Attachments:

2 photos - Credit to Michael Elderman

*In order of appearance left to right:*

City of Riverside Councilman Chris Mac Arthur – Ward 5

City of Riverside Councilman Mike Gardner – Ward 1

Mayor, Ronald O. Loveridge

City of Riverside Councilman Andy Melendrez – Ward 2

City of Riverside Councilman Rusty Bailey – Ward 3

